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SUBJECT: HAITI USAID/DART - SYSTEM FOR FORMAL REQUESTS FOR U.S.
MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: PORT A 0054

¶1. (U) Summary. The scale and scope of the current crisis in Haiti has created opportunities to utilize the unique capacities of the U.S. Military to support relief efforts. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) serves as the focal point for receiving formal civilian requests for U.S. military assistance to facilitate humanitarian response efforts in Haiti. The USAID/DART then validates, prioritizes, and directs requests, referred to as mission taskings, to U.S. military counterparts to implement. Application of, and adherence to, the established system is critical for effective coordination and implementation with other humanitarian actors on the ground. End Summary

OVERVIEW

¶2. (U) Of the 70 to 80 disasters declared by U.S. Ambassadors on average each year, only a small portion involve the U.S. Military and then only under specific conditions. The Department of Defense (DOD) is not an instrument of first resort in responding to humanitarian crises. U.S. military support of U.S. Government (USG) civilian-led humanitarian assistance must be: 1) at the specific request of USAID through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) or the U.S. State Department (State), and 2) vetted by USAID and State to ensure that it is appropriate. The only exception to this policy is when a Combatant Commander exercises his authority to use U.S. military resources to save life and limb within the first 72 hours after a disaster. When DOD support is required, a system exists to appropriately direct U.S. military assistance and facilitate civilian-military coordination.

¶3. (U) In an international disaster situation when host nation and international civilian capacities are not sufficient or unavailable due to the magnitude of the event, USAID/OFDA serves as the focal point for channeling civilian requests for U.S. military assistance to facilitate humanitarian response efforts. In the context of the Haiti response, USAID/OFDA is represented by the USAID/DART. Within the USG, USAID offers the comparative advantage of its field presence and its pool of skilled, experienced humanitarian

assistance and development professionals. USAID/OFDA is the office within USAID responsible for facilitating and coordinating USG emergency assistance overseas. USAID/OFDA provides humanitarian assistance to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the social and economic impact of humanitarian emergencies worldwide. USAID/OFDA has a dedicated team that coordinates and liaises between USAID/OFDA and the U.S. Military during humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations to realize USAID/OFDA's mandate and harmonize USG efforts. Full-time USAID/OFDA Advisors are also posted at the relevant U.S. Military Combatant Commands.

14. (U) Requests for U.S. military assistance originate from a variety of sources, including other internal USG agencies, U.N. organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other donors. In adherence to internationally recognized practice for employing foreign military assets in disaster response, the U.S. system requires requests to be channeled through the USAID/DART for validation, prioritization, and tasking to the military. Requests are validated based on humanitarian principles and, when the U.N. is present, in concert with U.N. and humanitarian community-identified priorities established through the international humanitarian coordination mechanism of the sector-specific cluster system.

15. (U) Once the USAID/DART formally communicates the mission tasking, the U.S military responding headquarters analyzes the mission tasking and either requests additional information, rejects the request, or staffs and sources the request. The USAID/DART, serving as the liaison between the U.S. Military and civilian partners, then communicates the information to the civilian organization. This process can be rapidly expedited within hours if necessary.

TYPES OF REQUESTS

16. (U) In post-earthquake Haiti, security , transport, and engineering structural assessments represent the significant majority of requests for U.S. military assistance, accounting for 25 percent, 22 percent, and 16 percent of total requests, respectively, to date. Requests include the deployment of military forces to provide security for specific locations or activities, such as relief commodity and food assistance distributions; heavy-lift capacity and transport for commodities, including via truck, aircraft, or shipping vessels; and the use of engineering specialists to assess structural damage of buildings and infrastructure.

UTILIZING THE SYSTEM

17. (SBU) USAID/DART staff highlight concern regarding incidences of civilian requests being transmitted directly to the U.S. Military, outside of the established system in place. The mechanism exists to ensure that requests are reviewed and prioritized to advance appropriate tasking for support and to facilitate effect coordination and communication between civilian and military institutions. USAID/DART staff emphasize the need for all actors to work within the established system. USAID/DART staff have informed the Joint Task Force-Haiti (JTF/H) of the process and

continue to work with the JTF/H on developing guidance to direct ad-hoc civilian and NGO requests to the established system.

18. (U) The newly established Joint Operations Tasking Center (JOTC) represents a response to the need for enhanced coordination in facilitating the provision of military assistance from the broad range of military forces present in Haiti, including the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the U.S. Military, and other international military forces, to NGOs operating in Haiti. The JOTC, composed of representatives from the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), MINUSTAH, other international militaries, and the USAID/DART is intended to serve as a centralized coordinating body for the use of military assets for logistics support, security assistance, and technical assistance. The JOTC does not determine priorities for the humanitarian community but links humanitarian support requests to military resources. Overall priorities are shaped and defined through the humanitarian community cluster system and must be validated by sectoral leads prior to JOTC consideration.

19. (U) Requests for U.S. Military assistance generated through the JOTC still require USAID/DART clearance. The USAID/DART continues to serve the critical function of the focal point for advancing requests through established channels and mechanism to the U.S. Military. Application and adherence to the established system is essential for effective coordination and implementation.

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